

# Free Software, Women and Functional Feminism

A. Mani

Department of Pure Mathematics, Calcutta University  
9/1B, Jatin Bagchi Road  
Kolkata-700029 India  
E-Mail: [a.mani.cms@gmail.com](mailto:a.mani.cms@gmail.com)  
Homepage: <http://www.logicamani.in>

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# ABSTRACT

This talk will be about the basics of free software, practical issues relating to software that need to be pro-actively confronted, the nature of the free software ecosystem, involvement of women in the ecosystem, discrimination, sexism and possible ways of improving the situation.

Free Software,  
Women and  
Functional  
Feminism

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Free Software

Proprietary Software

Free Software  
Adoption

Feminism

Women in Free  
Software

More About  
Licenses

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# Myself

- Research in Algebra, Logic, Rough Sets, Vagueness and related areas.
- Course development in Machine Learning, Soft Computing.
- Occasionally involved in independent consultancy in KDD, Statistics and Specifications
- GNU/R expert
- Free Software Activism: Ubuntu Women Project, GLUG Kolkata, (ilug-Cal.info), Fedora, LQ, GNU/R India
- Functional Feminist

# Free S/W Four Freedoms

- The freedom to run the program, for any purpose
- The freedom to study how the program works, and adapt it to your needs
- The freedom to redistribute copies so you can help others
- The freedom to improve the program, and release them to the public for the benefit of the whole community.
- Copyleft Free Software licenses are Better than other FOSS licenses.

# Examples of Free Software

- GNU, Open BSD, Free BSD, NetBSD, Hurd, HelenOS, Linux, ChromeOS
- Browsers: Firefox, Konqi, Dillo, Midori, Chromium
- Android (Mostly), Top 500 Supercomputers
- In GNU/Debian over 60000 free software packages are available
- Kernels: Linux, BSD, Mach microkernel (Hurd), Spartan (HelenOS multiserver microkernel), Minix

# Advantages of Free Software

- Anybody will be free to understand, modify and compile the source.
- Bugs are more easy to detect and rectify due to number of developers and users.
- Malicious code and backdoors cannot be hidden in the code.
- Code can be used for any purpose in general.
- Diversity in development and improved code quality
- Cost and development time involved in adoption, maintenance and development is lesser and reasonable

# DRM

- Digital Restrictions Management (DRM)
- DRM is used to prevent sharing of digital media by programs
- Example: All Apple products impose DRM that controls your music, movies, and games.
- 
- Boycott DRM
- Join <http://lists.defectivebydesign.org/mailman/listinfo/drm-elimination-crew>



# Open Source

- OSS need not be OSS(OSI)
- OSS(OSI) is often Free Software
- Free Software is always OSS(OSI) in theory
- Many key concerns like DRM are not addressed by OSI
- Example: openDRM is OSS, but NOT Free Software
- OSS people stress on advantages of source being open, not freedom

# Evil Practices

- PrS is used to spy on users, put backdoors and restrict/violate their freedom.
- PrS are designed for **vendor lock-in** and destroy development.
- PrS follow wrong security models: **by obscurity**.
- PrS are not verifiable properly for their integrity.
- Examples: MS Windows, IE, MS Edge, SAS, Parts of OSX
- Today's Internet could have been 10 years ago without MSIE.  
Must read  
<http://toastytech.com/evil/ieisevilstory.html>

# Proprietary Software Companies-1

- Governments are the largest users of software.
- PrSC bribe Govt Officials, Spread FUD, Ultimately try EDGI
- Example FUDs: Gnu/Linux will break your Windows PC, Announce Nonexisting Products
- Embrace, Extend, Extinguish @ M\$. Tech Rights: [techrights.org](http://techrights.org)
- F\*uck hardware vendors ( \$ 2/license if you sell only M\$ Windows )
- In 1997, Microsoft was sued successfully by Sun over appropriating Java standards.

# Proprietary Software Companies-2

- In India, proprietary tools and OS have been in publicly funded institutions for long
- Despite all the activism for nearly 18 years
- Free S/W adoption has been slowly improving- but Governments and Proprietary Companies are corrupt
- EDGI in Kerala
- Recent: <http://techrights.org/2016/01/04/india-china-microsoft/>
- SPSS, SAS : Vendor Lock-in

# Copy-Left License

- A License that is Free as in Freedom
- Requires Derivative Works to be Free
- Requires Derivative Works to be under the same License.
- Strong Copy-left: GNU-GPL, AGPL,
- Weak Copy Left: MPL, LGPL. Non Copy-Left: BSD, X11

# Affero GPL (AGPL)

- Loophole in Application Service Provider (ASP) relative GGPL
- Copyleft provisions are not triggered by using and not distributing on a network (SAS)
- Web applications under AGPL must provide source to their users.
- AGPLv2 is incompatible with GGPLv2 : Strong Copy-Left
- AGPLv3 is compatible with GGPLv3 in the sense that they relax their copyleft conditions for each other only.
- Example: MongoDB, Drupal/Joomla Modules, ShareLaTeX

# Tivoization

- Source X under GNU-GPLv2
- Company creates device Z and compiles binary B(X) from X.
- Only B(X) can run on Z - but you cannot compile a binary from X for Z
- Tivoization: manufacturer knows people will want to change software features but seeks to stop them.
- This cannot be done for software under GNU-GPLv3+
- DRM is naturally enforced via tivoization in the context of free software

# GNU-GPLv3+ vs GNU-GPLv2

- Program under GPLv2 cannot be included in a larger program under GPLv3+
- GPLv3 blocks Tivoization: freedom means you control what your software does.
- GPLv3+ ensures that you can remove nasty features like DRM from your software.
- GPLv3 resists software patent deals like the Novell-Microsoft pact.
- Through the pact, Microsoft wanted users of GNU/Linux to pay for use of their patents - this is prevented by GNU-GPLv3.
- GPLv3 provides users with explicit patent protection from the program's contributors and redistributors.



# Politics

- RMS geeks like to think that they can ignore politics, you can leave politics alone, but politics won't leave you alone.
- West Bengal Politics and FOSS
- Indian Politics, Lobbies and FOSS
- Microsoft can be viewed as a Political Movement in US
- in India too.
- The position of the corrupt: Open Source can Co-exist with Proprietary s/w.

# Free Software Adoption Methods

- Community Based vs Corporate Induced
- Communities: User, Developer, Contributors, Institutions
- Debian related communities in Kerala, Karnataka
- Corporate induced: just target potential employees and available markets. Generate new markets??
- Threats to Eco-System: Most new contributors are doing so for a career in FOSS **at the feet of MNCs**. It is necessary to break free.
- At all times, the communities must be able to generate sustainable models

# Contribution Models

- SME: good idea to concentrate on enjoying one's work rather than slaving overtime for monetary gains / blind growth.
- MNCs, Open Source MNCs+ : Not enough jobs (even though 81+% of IT jobs require FOSS skills).
- Part-Time Contribution /models: May work for women with multiple expertise zones, academics.
- Public Sector Jobs: Very few have been sanctioned.
- Local Real Community Models: Zapatist models, Some NGOs on Women's issues, Feminist Models?
- Interdisciplinary Projects: Plenty of Scope

# Good Licenses

- Hactivismo Enhanced Source Software License:  
<http://www.hactivismo.com/about/hessla.php>
- Hactivismo restricts GNU-GPL 3+ with clauses for human rights
- IMO Clauses 12 -14 need complete rewrite
- Alladin Free Public License: AFPL = GNU-GPL + Two Clauses
- AFPL: The source code must be included with any software distribution.
- AFPL: The software may not be sold, including any fees involved with distribution.
- Licenses for Compassionate activism

# Gender

- **Sex** of a person: a plural concept including hormonal sex, brain sex, clinical sex, chromosomal sex, physical sex and more. Biological sex?
- **Gender** is a plural concept that includes social constructs relating to **gender expression, discrimination and gender identity**.
- **Gender identity** of a person is the person's own sense of gender irrespective of expression of the same in society
- **Sexism** refers to discrimination against women based on her sexual features and gender expression in the context of an unequal and discriminatory society
- How many genders? sexual orientations? : Book: Gender Bread Person
- **Gender Discrimination** refers to discrimination against people on the basis of their gender identity gender expression or features relating to the two.

# Definitions

- Feminism is a system of social science perspectives that critically seek just and optimal rights for women in all spheres of life in theory and praxis.
- In any specific society, discrimination tends to have much variety and varieties remain hidden to different extents relative the population.
- A reasonable feminist approach should be able to
  - identify discrimination and vectors
  - propose mechanisms of the same
  - propose solutions and strategies for handling the issues locally and globally over associated time frames.

# Feminisms and Functional Feminism

- In social sciences, it is important to select subsets of information dynamics from which all other complex phenomena may become explicable. Das Capital is the work of a genius.
- Types of Feminisms: Intersectional, Marxist, Lesbian, Grounded, Radical, Sex-Positive, Kyriarchy, Separatist, Trans, Lipstick, Queer, Eco
- Key Terms: Discrimination, Objectification (especially Sexual Objectification), Oppression, Patriarchy, Stereotyping, Discriminatory Order Structure
- Objectification is treat a person as an object - this leads to abusive behaviour. If one really respects another person then they would not objectify them.
- Link: [plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-objectification](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-objectification)
- In geek domain, women are more interested in applying intersectional feminism. But a pure study of applications need not result in desirable agility.

# Functional Feminism

- Each type of feminism reinterprets perceived information over its own fundamental abstraction - Comprehension may not be uniformly easy
- Misogynist defenders of the "discriminatory order structure/ patriarchy/ intersectionality" resort to myth making about the feminism and make matters difficult.
- Some people may feel more comfortable with participating in **<some-name> women's group** as opposed to **<some-name> feminist group** - example of misinformed antagonism.
- Plus patriarchy is supported by a huge microaggression industry transmitted often through memes.
- **Memes are ideas that tend to be replicated by people, that serve as functional units of cultural evolution. The process is memesis.**
- Example: Myths about lesbians in the west in the media during esp 1950-1975 had an impact on nature of prejudice.



# Social Discrimination Types

- Body Shaming as in **you are ugly**
- Stereotyping in sync with Patriarchial views as in **be docile as a woman should be**
- Social Narcissism - abusing/deriding others actions for personal gratification.
- Gaslighting motivated by Patriarchial views
- Bigotry against sexual orientations
- Abusive behavior originating in objectification

# Micro-Aggressions

- Microaggressions are small, subtle, often subconscious actions that marginalize people in oppressed groups.
- Sue'73 defined it as brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults ...
- Many microaggressions exist because of macroaggressions because the microaggressors do not understand the basic nature of the macroaggression and lack empathy.
- A guy in office **Oop, Katie's got the low cut dress on today! I know where I'm sitting!**
- Katie has a nice article on being asked to **lighten up**, whenever she reacted to routine patriarchy reinforcing microgressions.
- Try and combat microaggressions by simple explanations or strong language as is appropriate.

# Sexism in FOSS World

- Online harrassment. Python Mailing Lists, Chennai LUG
- Inappropriate Sexual Presentations in Events.
- Sexist advertising. Example: Booth Babes
- Incidents: GF Wiki Category:Incidents
- Gender biased documentation

# Example Situations

- Alpha males behave as though the community is all male. (Exclusion)
- 'Ubuntu is going to be sexy' when a woman joins in (a Sexism)
- You're working in Perl? (Complex Sexism)
- Mean comments about how ugly and disgusting a woman's FLOSS code is, often behind her back.
- Women are just not interested (Gender Essentialism)
- Sexualized imagery/expression (Women are objects?)

# Examples

- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault
- Symptoms of Rape Culture
- Idea of men **Winning Over** a woman is a symptom of **rape culture**.
- **F\*ck You** associates sex with violence.

# Silencing Techniques

- Harming the community
- Tone argument: Angry feminist mob, More flies with honey, You are the bully, Appeal to Saints
- You are being emotional
- You are crazy
- You are too advanced.
- In many situations, silencing may require no fresh investment.

# How To: Welcoming Environment

- Explicitly invite Women speakers
- Discourage Sexualized presentations
- Do not allow sexist humor, online harassment and behaviors that discourage women. (recognize such behavior)
- Publish related event Guidelines
- Web forums/ mailing lists with feminist moderators, **Impose Code of Conduct on all.**
- Safe Spaces, Women only spaces

# Sexual Harassment: Definitions Matter

- Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. The reaction must be **justified**.
- SH can be a one-off incident
- SH examples: unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing, staring or leering, suggestive comments or jokes, sexually explicit pictures/media,
- insults or taunts of a sexual nature, sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, accessing sexually explicit internet sites, inappropriate advances on social networking sites,
- unwanted invitations to go out on dates or requests for sex, intrusive questions about an employee's private life or body, unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against someone,
- physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.



# SH Policy

- Education and open communication about SH Policies adopted and complaint handling process is absolutely essential.
- SH Complaint Committees are often a boys club
- Ideally investigations should involve external teams
- Policies should include Organisation's stance on SH, Objectives, Definition of SH, Relevant Examples, What is not SH, Consequences, Responsibilities and Procedures
- In India poor policy formulation and implementation are too common.
- Indian judiciary is yet to learn to define sexual assault.

# Some Figures

Sector	Year	%
Global IT	2016	15
Ubuntu Community	2009	5
Major Conferences	<2010	3
GUADEC	2013-15	15
PyCon	2014	30
Kolkata GLUG	2006-16	10
GNU/R Workshop	2011	20

# FOSS Women's Groups

- GNU/Debian, Ubuntu, Arch, Fedora, <FOSS Group> Women/Ladies
- Linuxchix, Local chapters - Have people shifted to <FOSS Group> Women/Ladies?
- GNU/Linux Women (Google+ group) - **Safe Spaces.**
- GNU Women Caucus, Syssters Subgroups
- How to integrate Feminist concepts and free culture concepts with free software?
- Empower Women, **Develop free software with feminist focus.**

# Example Projects

- Free Software for Specialized feminist projects.
- Free Software with feminist knowledge and skills:
- ...Knowledge Management/Presentation, Teaching Skills need to evolve
- Empowerment Projects for the poor majority, marginalized communities
- Empowermentors Collective: Empowermentors focus on sharing knowledge and technical skills, producing free software and free media, and learning about and from each other.
- Improving Codes of Conduct

# Open Content Licenses

- Content should be Freely Available
- Modifiable Subject to Attribution
- Redistribution
- Costs
- Clear Terms of Distribution
- No Publisher Copyright

# Copy-Left Licenses for Documents

- GNU-GPL3+
- Share Alike?
- GFDL: Technical measures to obstruct further copying of your copies.
- GFDL: Printing
- Open Content License
- Open Publishing License

# Open Licenses

- Creative Commons Licenses
- Design Science License
- Free Art license
- FreeBSD Documentation License
- Open Content License
- Open Publication License

# Creative Commons Licenses-4.1+

- CC BY
- SA : Share Alike (Allow Modification only if user shares it)
- NC: Non-Commercial
- ND: No Derivative Works
- Compulsory: Attribution
- Optional: Restrictions or Waivers



# Links

- Free Software Foundation: <http://www.fsf.org>
- Free Software: [gnu.org/philosophy/philosophy.html](http://gnu.org/philosophy/philosophy.html)
- Free Software Licenses: [gnu.org/licenses/licenses.html](http://gnu.org/licenses/licenses.html)
- Debian Women: <https://www.debian.org/women>
- UW Challenging Sexism:  
<http://wiki.ubuntu-women.org/ChallengingSexism>
- UW ML: <https://lists.ubuntu.com/mailman/listinfo/ubuntu-women>

# Links

- Arch Women: <https://archwomen.org>
- Ubuntu Women Project:
- Fedora Women:
- GLUG-Kolkata: [www.ilug-cal.info](http://www.ilug-cal.info)
- Geek Feminism Wikia:

# QUESTIONS?

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Software is a form of  
Knowledge and Knowledge  
ought to be Free!

# CHEERS !

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